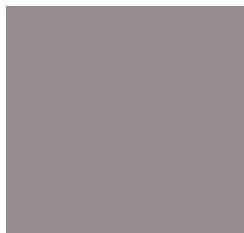
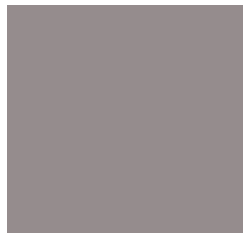
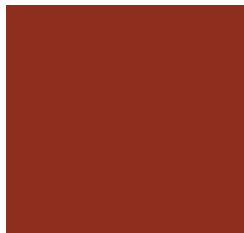


2014 - 2016 Business Growth & Strategy Plan

Inspired by a Philosophy of Continuous Improvement



inside

| | |
|---|------|
| INTRODUCTION | p3 |
| OUR PLEDGE... / CUSTOMER SERVICE PRINCIPLES | p5 |
| TECHNOLOGY | p7/8 |
| HUMAN CAPITAL | p10 |
| BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS / STRATEGIC PLAN | p11 |

Mission The Houston Permitting Center (HPC) mission is to help customers achieve their goals while complying with City regulations. To accomplish this, the HPC will continue to implement customer-focused, innovative and efficient services. Providing excellent service, streamlining business processes, integrating innovative technologies, and proactively engaging customers are all cornerstones of our philosophy of continuous improvement.

+ Introduction

When traveling around Houston it is clear real estate development and construction is booming. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2014, the City of Houston issued building permits for construction valued at \$7.6 billion -- a 28 percent increase when compared to FY 2013. Combined residential and non-residential permits showed an increase of 15 percent in the same 12-month period. With new commercial and residential building, the demand for permits will continue to rise. To accommodate the growing needs of the Greater Houston development community, the HPC has developed initiatives to ensure optimal delivery of services. The Business Growth & Strategy Plan was developed to establish priorities and provide a formal structure for the HPC. By focusing efforts through a well-defined strategy, this plan will position the organization to improve services now and into the future.



HPC analysis



Our
pledge to
you...



Customer Service Principles

Guided by a passion for civic service, **we pledge** to provide business services that create a safe, clean, and sustainable community. Our mission focuses on the customer experience and places customers at the heart of its business. Supporting this mission and **philosophy of continuous improvement**, we defined four customer service principles. In the years to come, these four guiding principles will serve as a roadmap around which our actions will be organized and assessed.

- 1. Serve our customers in the most polite and knowledgeable way possible.**
- 2. Provide our customers with the most consistent and accurate information possible.**
- 3. Empower our employees to solve customers' problems.**
- 4. Measure our customers' satisfaction and continuously strive for improvement.**

To truly be customer-centered, an organization must integrate its entire range of business functions around satisfying the needs of its customers while containing costs, leveraging technology and embracing a culture of customer service all within a fast-paced municipal environment.

This Business Growth & Strategy Plan will serve as a guide that focuses on processes that are customer friendly and will inform planning for associated fiscal resources. Key projects that will guide the HPC over the next two years are outlined in the following pages.

+ more :)



TECHNOLOGY

Website/Portal Development Project

Initiated in 2014, the HPC Website/Portal Development Project will completely recreate the HPC online presence and consolidate all permitting information into a single convenient application. Upon completion, this project will guide businesses and residents through the process of determining what permits, licenses or registrations are required for their circumstance. Customers will have the option to apply, pay online, and obtain up-to-date contact information for relevant staff. In addition, this project has a number of other goals including improving website usability and content organization and refining the HPC brand through a consistent online look and feel. Anticipated project completion is early 2016.

Electronic Plan Review

Information Technology plays a critical role in the execution of business goals and strategies. As business objectives evolve to accommodate the changing needs of customers so do the new technologies that ensure optimal service delivery. The Electronic Plan Review is a web-based application and document workflow solution that streamlines the plan submittal review process. This initiative in conjunction with the transition to the next generation permitting system will allow the HPC to manage customer accounts, consolidate renewals, analyze requirements and schedule payments. By moving to a digitally automated

system, we will significantly reduce the time to obtain a permit and reduce paper and imaging costs while continuing to implement more environmentally sustainable practices.

Telecommunication Project

The Telecommunication Project will supplement the Website/Portal Development Project by modernizing the current phone system to reduce (1) the number of dropped calls (2) call wait-times and (3) misrouted calls. A key component of this project is the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) application. IVR allows customers to self-navigate through a selection of automated options. This technology ensures customer calls are promptly and accurately routed and minimize upfront infrastructure costs. While the application adds convenience to customers, it will in no-way hamper their ability to speak with a live agent.

ILMS Replacement/New Permit System

The City of Houston (City) Public Works and Engineering Department (PWE) is scheduled to replace the Integrated Land Management System (ILMS) with a more modern system over the next two (2) years. This effort will streamline the process and consolidate multiple systems, thus improving service for customers.



HPC cashiers process both walk-in transactions & mailed payments.

**Nearly 236,000 sales transactions totaling roughly
\$123 million in revenue were processed in FY 2014.**

Inspection Alert Notification Project

The Inspection Alert Notification will augment the current Telework Project program. Telework provides a wireless strategy for inspectors to enter data from the field into the permitting system for tracking inspection activity. As a result, scheduled inspections and inspection results are promptly uploaded to the permitting system and made instantly available to customers. The enhancement will offer customers the option to sign up for both email and/or text message notifications at registration through the City of Houston Permits website. The new system will send alert notifications to customers on the morning of the inspection, providing a two-hour window for their appointment.

Q-Flow Update

To continue to fulfill high expectations of quality, an investment in technology is critical. The HPC will update its Customer Queue Management System (QFlow) with new features to increase customer load balance and satisfaction. Over the next two years, the following features will be implemented.

Appointment Scheduling: Calendars in QFlow allow customers to secure blocks of time to meet in person with service providers. Currently, the HPC has four (4) sections from two (2) departments using the online calendar portal. In FY 2015, the HPC will expand this service to two (2)

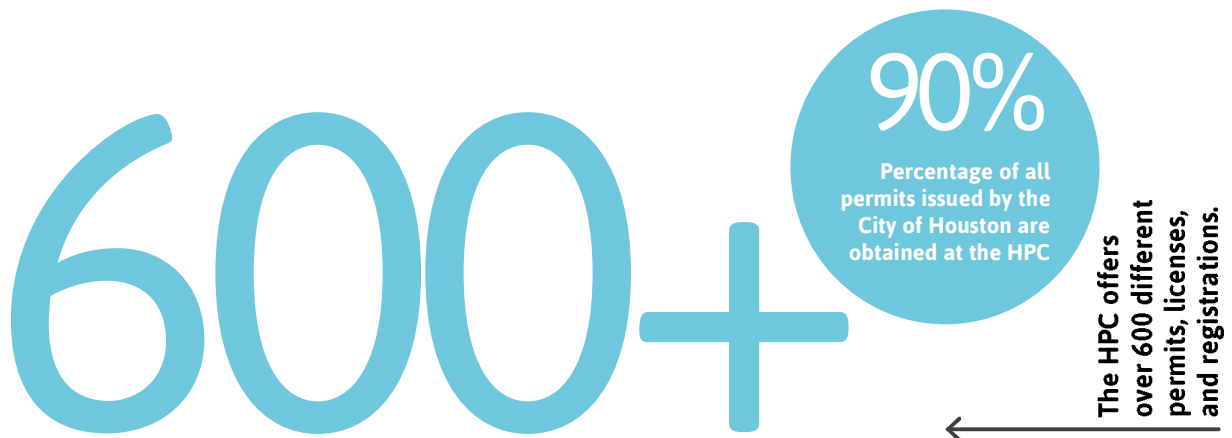
additional groups. Once fully integrated, this feature will significantly reduce wait-times and improve overall service delivery.

SHELBY-Mobile Check-in: This application will allow customers to check in when arriving at the HPC from the convenience of their mobile device. Currently visitors must physically pull a ticket from a kiosk to check in. By using less tickets this application will reduce paper waste as well as save time for the customer, resulting in a faster service delivery.

Real Time Wait-Time: This application provides customers with an online view of current wait-times for services at the HPC.

Text Messaging: This feature allows customers to opt in to receiving text notification of their queue status via the QFlow system after check-in. For example, alerts will be sent to customers as their queue status moves to the 5th, 3rd, and 1st queue positions. This application has been tested in several services with successful results. Over the next two (2) years the HPC will look to expand this application to other services within the building that can benefit from text message notifications.

SENSE: This feature will allow customers to provide critical feedback on services within the HPC through multiple channels that include QFlow, Kiosks, SMS text messaging and the SHELBY interfaces.





HUMAN CAPITAL

Manager Supervisor Development Program

The HPC is fortunate to have talented and dedicated staff that delivers excellence in service even under the most challenging circumstances. To maintain a high quality workforce, resources will be allocated towards a leadership development program that will help managers and supervisors provide direction for the present and plan for the future. This 12-week certification program will offer courses on a combination of soft and hard skills geared toward creating well-rounded leaders. The program will utilize professionals from around the City, in a wide range of specialties, to teach valuable skills such as process improvement, human capital management, and various types analysis, among others.

Customer Service Training

Getting the right people with the right training is perhaps one of the biggest determining factors of a winning customer service strategy. Well-trained, responsive, accountable and professional staff that ensure a consistent approach to service delivery is the goal of our monthly Customer Service Training. Courses introduce the basic elements of delivering good customer service through topics explaining the different types of communication (verbal, non-verbal, telephone, and email etiquette), conflict resolution, and anger management. Attendees also go through an onboarding process that welcomes them to their new role at the HPC, provides education on the buildings' diverse programmatic offerings, and informs them of the HPC organizational culture and vision.

Lean Six Sigma Training

Lean Six Sigma is a methodology used to improve business processes through lean methods and statistical analysis. The goal of Lean tools is to identify and eliminate nonessential and non-value added steps in business processes in order to streamline production, improve quality and increase customer satisfaction. Select staff will pursue various tiers of certification, implementing actual lean improvements in their respective areas. Many industries have implemented this approach to achieve hard and soft money savings while gaining customer loyalty.

HPC Professional Speaker Series

To cultivate an empowered workforce, the HPC strives to create a work environment that encourages staff to act through accountability, personal responsibility, and supportive leadership. Patterned after TED Talks, the HPC Professional Speaker Series will invite all staff to learn from community leaders that will present on topics involving innovative solutions, creative design, and support an orientation for change and progressive thought.

Mentor Program

Mentoring is an increasingly popular way of providing guidance and support to young professionals in both the public and private sector. The HPC Mentoring Program will be geared toward promoting professional development, facilitating organizational collaboration, and provide a platform for informal discussion. This program matches seasoned professionals from around the City with less experienced ones at the HPC. The program provides junior professionals with an added resource to help guide them in their careers.



BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS

Plan Drop-off Area

In 2014, the HPC improved customer parking with the lease of additional capacity, which added over 100 new parking spaces. To assist customers further, the HPC will build a Plan Drop-off area. This covered area, located near the main entrance, will be a drop off point for customers on days with inclement weather. Customers will be able to pull underneath the covered area in their vehicles, leave their plans underneath the covered area, park their vehicles and retrieve their plans without worry of weather damage. This project will be complete in early FY 2015.

Customer Load Balancing

The Houston economy continues to grow, and so will the demands on the HPC. With that in mind, it will be essential to ensure that services throughout the building are optimally placed. Over the next year, the HPC will begin exploring options for moving different service groups throughout the building. As improvements in business processes and technology continue to be implemented this will become less of a priority with regards to customer traffic volume.

STRATEGIC PLAN

5-Year Strategic Plan

Work on several projects outlined in this plan are already underway. Peering further over the business horizon, these and additional key initiatives will be integrated into a larger 5-year strategic plan aimed at a progressive and sustainable business approach that will increase efficiency, reduce costs, and improve the timeliness of our service delivery. The 5-Year Strategic Plan will also identify and prioritize key initiatives for FY 2017 through FY 2021.



2014-2016
Business Growth & Strategy Plan

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